

## PATENT

**C. REMARKS****1. Status of the Claims**

Claims 1-2, 4-10, 21-22, and 24-30 are currently present in the Application. Claims 1 and 21 are independent claims and have been amended along with claims 4 and 24. Claims 3 and 23 have been cancelled with the limitations originally found in these dependent claims being incorporated in their respective independent claims. Claims 11-20 and 31-35 have been cancelled due to a previous restriction requirement. No claims have been added in this Response.

**2. Drawings**

Applicants note with appreciation the acceptance of Applicants' formal drawings which were filed with the application on March 8, 2001.

**3. Allowable Subject Matter**

Applicants note with appreciation the indication by the Examiner that claims 3-10 and 23-30 would be allowable if rewritten in independent form. The limitations of original claims 3 and 23 have been cancelled with the limitations of these claims incorporated into their respective independent claims, 1 and 21. The remaining claims, 2, 4-10, 22, and 24-30, each depend, directly or indirectly, on claims 1 and 21 and, therefore, are allowable for at least the same reasons that claims 1 and 21 are allowable.

**4. Claim Rejections - 35 U.S.C. § 102 - Alleged Anticipation**

Claims 1, 2, 21, and 22 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) as allegedly being anticipated by U.S. Patent Publ. No.

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2001/000536A1 to Stephen A. Tarin (hereinafter "Tarin"). While Applicants disagree that Tarin anticipates Applicants' claimed invention, Applicants have amended their independent claims, as described in the preceding section, to incorporate limitation found to be allowable in the Office Action in order place the application in a condition of allowability. Therefore, in light of Applicants' amendments to the independent claims, the rejections of claims 1 and 21 are moot. Because claims 2 and 22 depend upon claims 1 and 21, the rejections under 35 U.S.C. § 102 are also moot as these claims are allowable for at least the same reasons as claims 1 and 21 are allowable.

Conclusion

As a result of the foregoing, it is asserted by Applicants that the remaining claims in the Application are in condition for allowance, and Applicants respectfully request an early allowance of such claims.

Applicants respectfully request that the Examiner contact the Applicants' attorney listed below if the Examiner believes that such a discussion would be helpful in resolving any remaining questions or issues related to this Application.

Respectfully submitted,

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